

*Consumer & Governmental  
Affairs Bureau*

*January 20, 2006*



# 2005 Goals

- ✓ **Furthering Access to Telecommunications for Americans with Disabilities**
  - Telecommunications Relay Service, Closed Captioning
- ✓ **Implementing Consumer Policy**
  - Telephone Consumer Protection Act, Junk Fax Prevention Act, CAN-SPAM Act, Truth-in-Billing, Continued Slamming Adjudications, Early Termination Fees
- ✓ **Rapid Response to Consumer Needs**
  - Consumer Center, Web Portals, Publications
- ✓ **Targeted Outreach**
  - Broadband, DTV, Disability Issues, Tribal, Rural
  - Working with our State, Tribal, and Local, Governmental Partners
- ✓ **Leveraging Technology**
  - Web Portals, Electronic Comment Filing System, Reference Information Center, Consumer Information Registry

# *Accessibility Highlights*

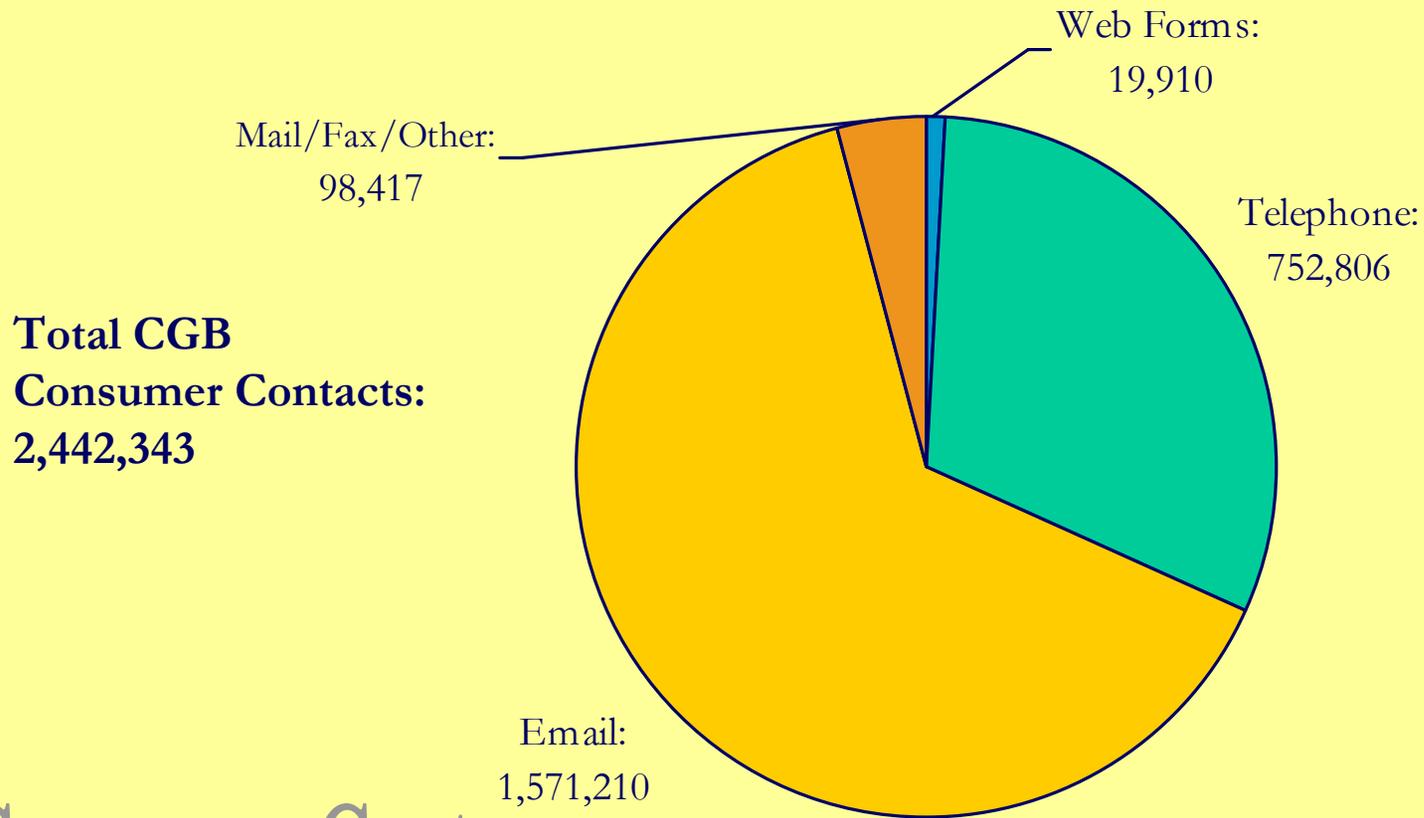
- **Strengthening Telecommunications Relay Service**
  - American Sign Language to Spanish Video Relay Service (VRS) is now compensable from the Interstate TRS Fund (Order on Reconsideration, 7/19/2005)
  - Two-lined captioned telephone service is now compensable from the Interstate TRS Fund (Order, 7/19/2005)
  - VRS now has Speed of Answer Requirements and VRS must now be offered 24/7 (Report and Order, 7/19/2005)
  - Exploring Solutions for 911 Access to VRS and Internet Protocol Relay (NPRM, 11/30/2005)
  - VRS Provider Certification Order will enable a wider range of eligible entities to meet the increasing demand for VRS service (Report and Order, 12/12/2005)
- **Focus on Closed Captioning**
  - Evaluating effectiveness of closed captioning rules (NPRM, 7/21/2005)
  - Implementing 1/1/06 closed captioning rules deadline
- **Interagency Coordinating Council**
  - Chairs the Emergency Communications Subcommittee of the Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Persons with Disabilities

# *Consumer Policy Highlights*

- **Junk Fax Prevention Act**
  - Proposed rules to implement Congressionally mandated protections against unsolicited facsimile marketing (NPRM, 12/9/2005)
- **Telephone Consumer Protection Act**
  - Adopted several orders to protect consumers from unwanted telemarketing (Declaratory Ruling, 8/17/2005, Order, 6/27/2005, 2<sup>nd</sup> Order on Reconsideration, 2/18/2005)
- **Early Termination Fees**
  - Evaluating issues concerning early termination fees imposed by Commercial Mobile Radio Service Providers
- **Truth-in-Billing**
  - Expanded the federal consumer protection rules applied to consumers' wireless phone bills (Second Report and Order, Declaratory Ruling, and Second NPRM, 3/18/2005)
- **Customer Accounts Record Exchange**
  - Facilitated exchange of records between carriers to increase accuracy in billing, reducing slamming (complaints down 51%) (MO&O, 2/25/2005)
- **Responded to 1238 Congressional Inquiries and 119 FOIAs**

# *Responsive to Consumers*

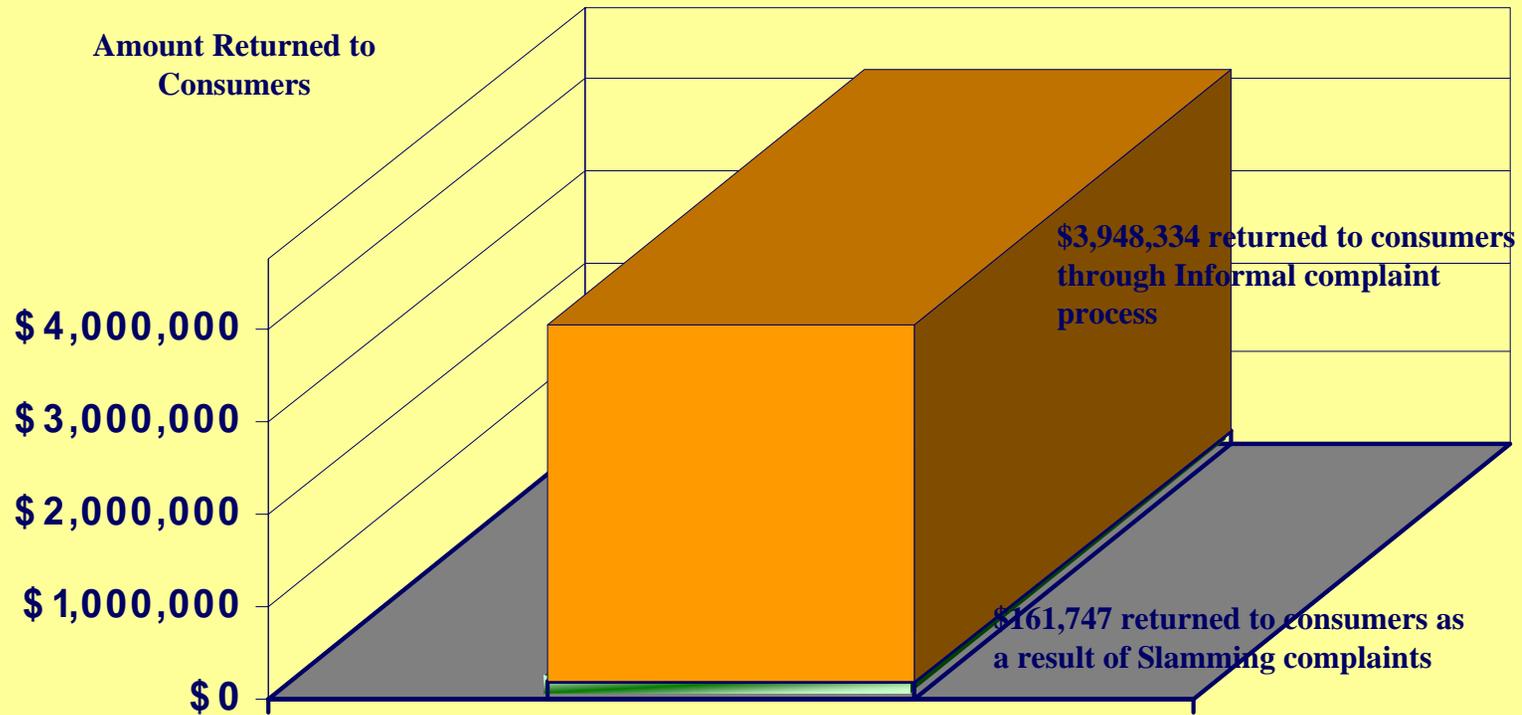
## 2005 Complaints and Inquiries



Consumer Center

# *Responsive to Consumers*

**\$4,110,081:** Total amount CGB returned to consumers in 2005



Consumer Center

# *Responsive to Consumers*

- **Created Specific Complaint Form for Obscene, Profane, and/or Indecent Material (Form 475B)**
  - Facilitates efficient processing of indecency-related complaints
- **Improved General Communications Related Issues Form (Form 475)**
  - Facilitates more efficient processing of TCPA-related complaints
  - Created Spanish language version
- **Improved Slamming Complaint Form (Form 501)**
  - Modified to facilitate FCC mediation with carriers on behalf of consumers
- **Scripts Project**
  - Updated scripts used by consumer and mediation specialists to educate consumers and respond to inquiries and complaints
- **Consumer Publications Project**
  - Newly created and/or updated 124 fact sheets/consumer advisories and other publications on topics such as broadband, VOIP-911, DTV Transition, and VRS

# *Hurricane Response*

- Immediately created **web pages** providing emergency information (77,451 hits)
- Developed **consumer advisories** on programs providing relief to hurricane victims
- Consumer Center staffed over weekends to answer **inquiries** and field **complaints** in wake of hurricanes (394 calls, 1525 emails)
- Released a Public Notice reminding video programming distributors to make **emergency information** regarding Hurricane Katrina evacuation and relief efforts **accessible** to persons with hearing or vision disabilities
- Issued an **emergency waiver** of rules allowing customers of carriers with damaged facilities to be quickly transferred to other carriers with minimal further disruption
- Released public notices, jointly with WTB, stating that the Commission expected the wireless industry to **ensure that no customers be cut-off** for non-payment or other reasons arising from the hurricanes
- Hosted **special session of the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee**, to discuss Emergency Preparedness in the wake of hurricanes (October 2005)

# *Outreach Highlights*

- Met with groups in Kotzebue, Cordova, & Anchorage, Alaska to discuss **broadband deployment** in rural areas (August 2005)
- Delivered keynote address for **Telecommunications for the Deaf** biennial conference, New Orleans, LA (July 2005)
- Participated in **White House Initiative on Asian American/Pacific Islanders** town hall meetings in Los Angeles, CA (April 2005), Houston, TX (May 2005) and Raleigh, NC (June 2005)
- Participated in **La Raza** conference in Philadelphia, PA (July 2005) and **NAACP** convention in Milwaukee, WI (July 2005)
- Received the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators' Achievement in Consumer Education Award for **DTV transition education** (June 2005)
- Presented a workshop on Telecommunications Relay Services at the **Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Conference** in San Antonio, TX (July 2005)
- Participated in **Arizona Roundtable on Rural Broadband** in Mesa, AZ (October 2005)

Outreach Team

# *Outreach Highlights*

- Fostered and maintained relationships with **state, local and tribal governments** in order to promote a better understanding of FCC programs, policies, rules and decisions
- Led joint FCC/NARUC/NASUCA **Working Group on Lifeline and Link Up** (announced in Austin, TX, July 2005)
- Hosted a delegation from the **National Conference of State Legislatures** (April 2005)
- Sponsored an **Indian Telecommunications Initiative** Regional Workshop and Roundtable with the National Congress of American Indians in Albuquerque, New Mexico (July 2005)
- Facilitated roundtable on Best Practices and tower siting review with the **United South and Eastern Tribes** (February 2005)
- Organized productive meetings of the **Consumer Advisory Committee** bringing together consumer groups and industry to advise Commission regarding consumer issues

Outreach Team

# *Leveraging Technology*

- Implemented improvements to the **Electronic Comment Filing System** allowing more tailored search results
- Improved **Reference Information Center** processing time from 45 days to 2 days
- Developed a **new broadband web page** serving as a user-friendly clearinghouse for consumer information about broadband: [www.fcc.gov/cgb/broadband.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/broadband.html)
- Created **Consumer Information Registry** allowing the Commission to send out targeted consumer information
- Developed the **VoIP911 website** to inform consumers about the limitations and availability of emergency service over VoIP: [www.voip911.gov](http://www.voip911.gov)
- Created **Closed Captioning Web Page** to simplify access to Commission decisions and pending petitions

# Leveraging Technology

## CGB Home Page Redesigned

The screenshot shows the redesigned CGB Home Page. On the left, there is a search bar with a 'Go' button and a 'Help - Advanced' link. Below this is a navigation menu with links for 'About CGB', 'Organizational Chart', 'Disability Rights Office', 'Inquiries and Complaints', 'Consumer Education and Policy', 'Intergovernmental Affairs', 'Reference Information Center', 'En Español', 'Tribal', 'Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC)', 'Intergovernmental Advisory Committee', and 'FCC Consumer Information Registry'. The main content area is titled 'Spotlights' and features several links and images: 'Hurricane Emergency Information' (with links for Katrina, Rita, Wilma and 'Katrina Cellphone Program'), 'Digital TV', 'Do Not Call Registry', 'Section 504 Program & Activities Accessibility Handbook', 'Section 504 Accessibility Handbook', 'ECFS Express' (with link 'File Your Comments Electronically'), 'Broadband: High Speed Internet', 'FCC Kids Zone', and 'VoIP 911'. On the right, there is a 'Hot Topics' section with links for 'Indecency and Obscenity', 'NEW: Complaint Form', 'Do Not Call Registry', 'Junk Faxes', 'Charges On Your Phone Bill', 'Rural Telecommunication Broadband', and 'More...'. Below this is an 'Information For Consumers' section with links for 'Consumer Alerts and Factsheets.', 'NEW: Telephone Service Help for Victims of Hurricane Katrina', and 'Unwanted Faxes'. At the bottom right, there is an 'FAQs' section with links for 'Cellular Phones', 'Internet', 'Satellite Dish', 'Radio', 'Telephone', and 'TV & Cable Broadcast'.

- Approximately 16 million hits to the CGB home page
- Nearly 1.5 million hits on the FCC Kidszone site
- 17,000 hits to Bienvenidos, our Spanish language pages

# 2006 Goals

- **Enabling Consumers to Make Informed Choices**
  - Outreach Events
  - Web Portals
  - Publications
  - Fact Sheets
  - Advisories
  - Consumer Center
- **Partnering with State, Local, and Tribal Governments**
  - Rural and Underserved Constituents
  - Emergency Preparedness
- **Continue Policy Focus**
  - Consumer Protection
  - Disabilities Access